

Keith - Falconer

Keith

341

am
biog
K

Sketch of the Life
of the
Hon. Hon Keith-Falconer
Pioneer Missionary to Arabia

by

The Rev. A. T. Pierson, D.D.

With Introduction.





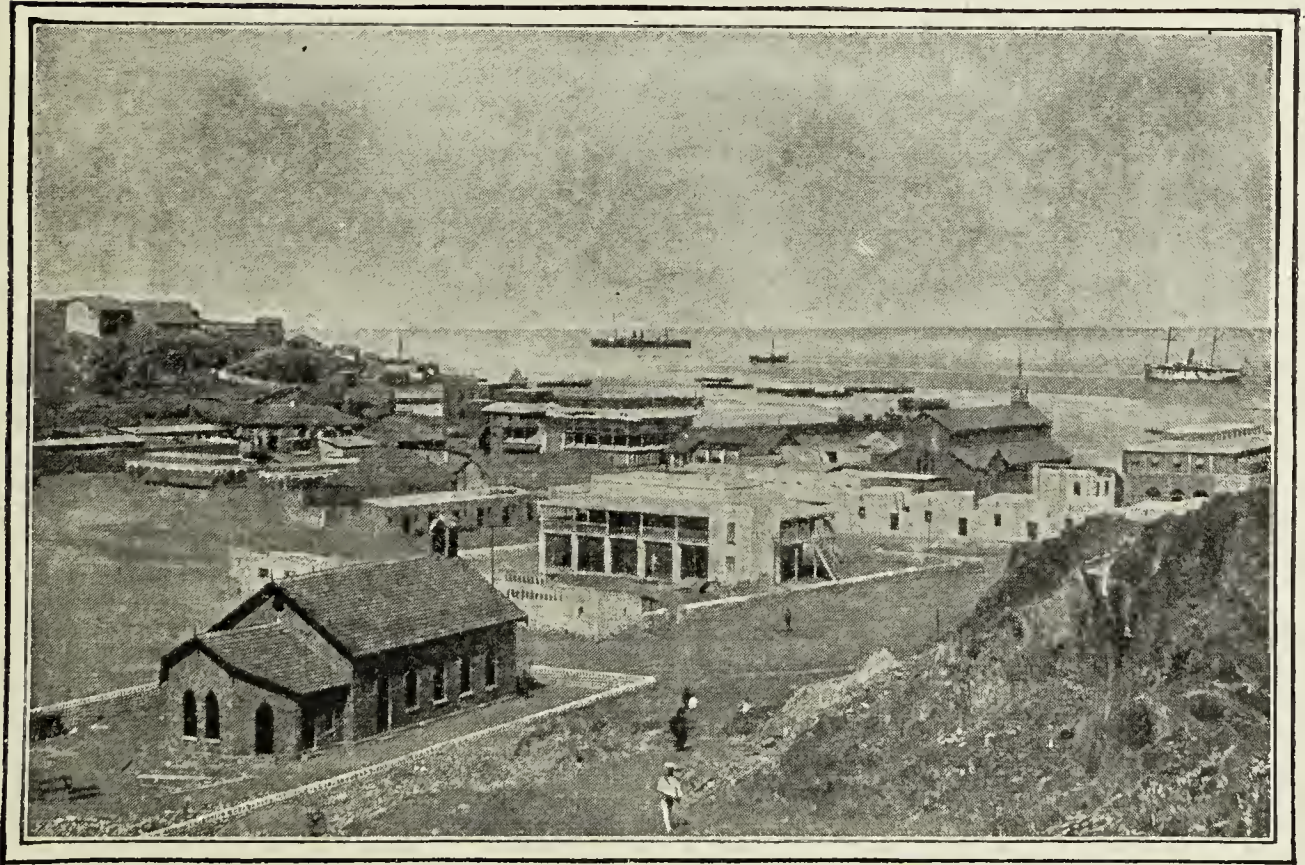
Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2018 with funding from
Columbia University Libraries

<https://archive.org/details/sketchoflifeofho00pier>



Sketch of the Life
of the
HON. ION KEITH-FALCONER
PIONEER MISSIONARY TO ARABIA

By the Rev. Arthur T. Pierson, D. D.



THE KEITH-FALCONER MEMORIAL CHURCH AT ADEN.

THE ARABIAN MISSION OF THE
REFORMED CHURCH IN AMERICA
25 East 22d Street, New York City

“ While vast continents are shrouded in almost utter darkness, and hundreds of millions suffer the horrors of heathenism or Islam, the burden of proof lies upon you to show that the circumstances in which God has placed you were meant by Him to keep you out of the foreign mission field.”

—*Ion Keith-Falconer.*

FOREWORD

There is no better fuel to kindle the missionary fire and keep it at white heat than the great missionary biographies. The life of David Brainerd inspired William Carey and made Henry Martyn a missionary. The life of Martyn has been the inspiration of thousands and still fascinates all who read it with its wonderful power. Raymund Lull, Henry Martyn, Karl Gottlieb Pfander, Thomas Valpy French, Cornelius Van Dyck—all these were pioneers, in a special sense, in preaching the Gospel to the Mohammedans, but Ion Keith-Falconer was the first to go out to Arabia, the Cradle of Islam.

His brief life story bears witness to the truth of Ruskin's words: "Of all the pulpits from which the human voice is ever sent forth, there is none from which it reaches so far as from the grave."

A volume of "Memorials of the Hon. Ion Keith-Falconer" was written by the Rev. Robert Sinker, D.D., shortly after his death in 1888 and reached a sixth edition. There was place, however, and demand for a more succinct account of this life in a more accessible form. The following sketch, prepared by one long skilled in writing missionary biographies and a high authority on missions, reached a wide circle of readers. By Dr. A. T. Pierson's kind permission and that of the publishers, the Arabian Mission has reprinted it in this new form, in the hope that it will give new inspiration to many.

In a real sense, the Arabian Mission, as well as the Mission of the United Free Church of Scotland, has been the fulfillment of the plans and hopes of him who lived, and died, "to call attention to Arabia." Arabia holds as a rich heritage the graves of those who, like Keith-Falconer, "died in faith not having received the promises but having seen and greeted them from afar." Those who come later enter into their labors, and should enter into their spirit of devotion and sacrifice. Ion Keith-Falconer being dead yet speaketh. Shall we not heed his message?

S. M. Z.

The Hon. Ion Keith-Falconer

Pioneer in Arabia

1856-1887

BY REV. ARTHUR T. PIERSON, D.D.*

INTRODUCTORY

History is “philosophy teaching by examples;” precept reduced to practice; the Book of Life presented in an illustrated, sometimes an illuminated, edition.

The heroic young man whose brief biography is here recorded represented the very flower of British civilization; and *the lesson of his short but beautiful career* may be comprehended in one sentence: The best is not too good for God’s work, and the length of life is not the measure of its service.

It is now forty-three years since Ion Keith-Falconer was born in Edinburgh, Scotland; and just then began *an eventful era in missions*, when more new doors were suddenly thrown open for missionary labor than in any previous decade of years since Christ’s last command was given to His Church. Born in 1856, he died in 1887—his brief life-story on earth covering only about thirty years. Yet, if “that life is long which answers life’s great end,” we must count these thirty years as spanning eternity, for they wrought out God’s eternal purpose, and left a lasting legacy of blessing to the young men of all generations, the true wealth and worth of which only eternity can compute.

* From “The Picket Line of Missions,” by permission of Eaton & Mains; copyrighted, 1897.

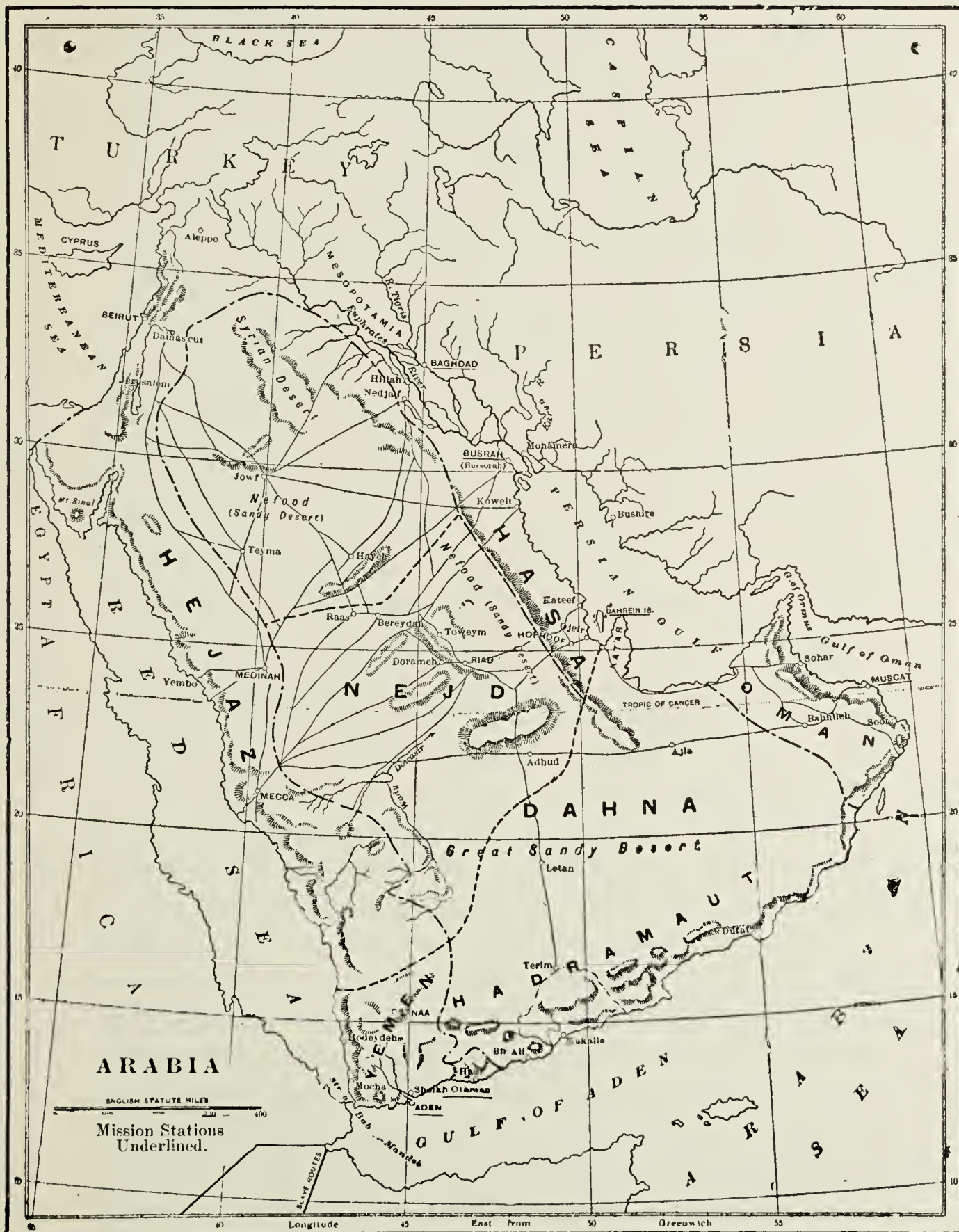
KEITH-FALCONER'S ANCESTRY

Oliver Wendell Holmes quaintly but profoundly said that the training of the child begins a hundred years before its birth. In other words, character has its law of heredity; it transmits, at least, its aptitudes. There is something in blood, in breeding, literally construed; and young Keith-Falconer might well be proud of his lineage, for in more senses than one it was noble. He could trace the stream of his family life back through eight centuries. In the year 1010, when Malcolm II. was King of Scotland, Robert Keith, his remote ancestor, by his valor and prowess in the battle with the Danish invaders, won the title of Hereditary Great Mareschal of Scotland and what Robert Keith did in battle for the Scottish crown his descendant, long after, did for the crown and covenant of the King of Kings—he became a standard-bearer on the battlefield where the Moslem and the Christian powers meet, to contend for the victory of the ages and he won a higher honor and title than can be conferred by human sovereigns as one of the Knights of the Cross.

HIS BOYHOOD

This biography may perhaps best be studied from four points of view: his boyhood, his college life, his home work, and his pioneer enterprise on the shores of the Red Sea.

The first period we may rapidly sketch, as the materials are not abundant. He was marked, as a boy, by four conspicuous qualities: a certain manliness, magnanimity, piety and unselfishness—rare traits indeed in a lad. He loved outdoor sports and excelled in athletics. Six feet and three inches in height, and well formed, his physical presence, when he attained full stature, was like that of Saul, the first king of Israel, and made him conspicuous among his fellows. No wonder that he was a favorite with the



modern advocates of muscular Christianity, since at twenty he was President of the London Bicycle Club and at twenty-two the champion racer of Britain, distancing in a five-mile race, in 1878, even John Keen himself. Four years later he was the first to go on his wheel from Land's End to John O'Groat's House—very nearly one thousand miles; and he triumphantly accomplished that feat in thirteen days—an average of nearly eighty miles a day.

If his stalwart manhood won applause, much more his sterling worth as a man of *inward strength and symmetry*. Let us not forget that this champion in the race for muscular superiority was too strong and brave in soul to be overcome of his own lusts, or enticed. He loved truth in the inward parts, and had no patience with shams or frauds and he recalls to our thought the famous statue which represents Veracity, standing with open face, the mask of dissimulation lying at his feet, cleft with the sword of Sincerity. He was not ashamed to make the Bible the one book he loved and studied and from the earliest dawn of his intelligence he was a faithful and loyal student of God's Holy Word, and sought by obedience to get ever-increasing knowledge of its true spirit and meaning.

Better than all, yet by no means independent of the rest, were *his unselfish piety and charity*. To impart is the highest blessedness, though most of us do not learn the bliss of giving, if at all, until late in life. A true benevolence is the ripest fruit, and grows on the topmost branch of holy living. Yet this lad early showed a deep sympathy with sorrow and suffering, and his boyhood's days are even yet remembered for his simple ministries to those who needed help. His old nurse has told how he went about, a boy of seven, reading and, in his way, explaining the Bible in the cottages of poor peasants; and how, having on one occasion spent his pocket money for some baker's choicest cakes, he bestowed them all, un-

tasted, upon a hungry boy. What a prophecy all this of the man who was to give his short life to teaching the ignorant, and himself to become one of God's barley loaves to feed dying souls!

UNIVERSITY LIFE

We come now to glance rapidly at his college life. Keith-Falconer was an example of *concentrated powers of mind* as well as of body, of a fine quality of brains as well as brawn. He mastered "shorthand," for instance, and rivalled Pitman himself. Those who want to see how a young man may distinguish himself in this difficult art would do well to read his article, "Shorthand," in the *Encyclopoedia Britannica*, which is a model of careful and comprehensive statement as to the science and art of phonography. Although he might not, perhaps, have been accounted a genius, he had the genius of industry, and, by "plodding," like William Carey, achieved distinction. He was conscientious in his curriculum, and applied himself to hard tasks, and patiently and persistently overcame obstacles, until he rose to an enviable rank and won honors and prizes which the indolent and indifferent never secure. We shall see, later on, how he was appointed to the professorship of Arabic at Cambridge University—a fitting crown to his academic career, in which he successfully mastered not only the regular and ordinary tasks, but theology, Hebrew, the Semitic languages, and kindred studies, and learned the Tonic Sol-fa system of music.

The *missionary spirit* burned in him, even in college days and within college walls, though the atmosphere of a university is not very stimulating to aggressive and evangelistic piety. The lad who, at Harrow School, not yet fourteen years old, was, by the testimony of the masters, "energetic, manly, and vigorous," although "neither a prig nor a Pharisee," was, during his brilliant career at Cambridge, which began in 1874, not only fearless in the

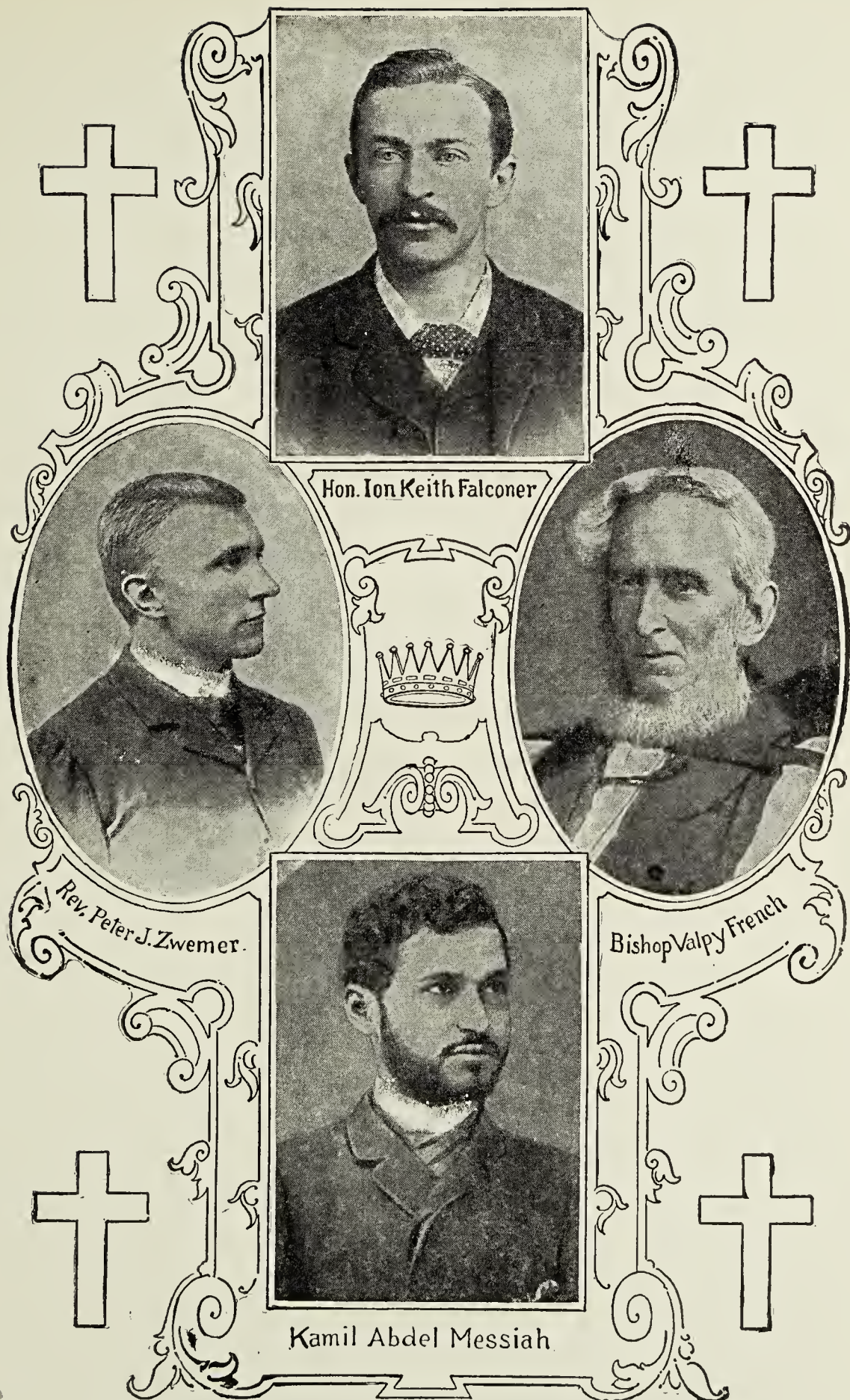
avowal of his Christian faith, but was moved by that passion for souls which compels unselfish utterance and effort in behalf of others.

In temperance and mission work he both used and tested his powers and adaptations as to a wider field of service. He became the leader of a band of Christian students who, in the old theatre at Barnwell, near Cambridge, carried on ragged school work and similar Gospel evangelism. From among themselves and friends, he and his fellow-workers raised about eight thousand dollars to purchase the building, and there a wide-reaching service began, whose harvest is not yet fully gathered and garnered. In this sphere Keith-Falconer earnestly and vigorously wrought, and when he spoke uttered the clear common sense which is better than ambitious oratory.

WORK OUTSIDE THE UNIVERSITY

A field in London next drew him. When yet but a lad of fifteen he had met F. N. Charrington, then a young man of twenty-one, who, while going afoot through Aberdeenshire, had paid a visit to the house of his father, the Earl of Kintore. Between Keith-Falconer and Charrington, notwithstanding six years' difference in their ages, a very intimate friendship at once sprang up, which bore that most blessed fruit, fellowship in holy work for God and man.

Mr. Charrington, now so conspicuously known as the founder and leader of the Tower Hamlets Mission in the East End of London, had, two years before meeting young Keith-Falconer, consecrated his life, at the cost of surrendering a princely fortune as a brewer, to uplifting and redeeming the East End drunkards and outcasts. When, late at night, he watched the wretched wives and mothers anxiously waiting for their husbands outside the vile drinkshops over which the name of "Charrington, Head & Co." shone in gold and azure, he felt a mighty impulse



FOUR PIONEER MISSIONARIES TO ARABIA.

[For an account of their work see Herbert Birk's *Life and Correspondence of Bishop T. V. French*; H. H. Jessup's *Kamil Abd ul Messiah*; Robert Sinker's *Memorials of Ion Keith Falconer*, and S. M. Zwemer's *Arabia the Cradle of Islam*, chap. xxxi-xxxiv.]

within him to break off the yoke of the drink traffic and, resigning the eldest son's birthright share in the business, he accepted a smaller portion, and even that he laid on the altar of humanity, resolved that the money, largely coined out of human woe, should be dedicated to human weal, in raising out of drunkenness and vice the very classes that the beershop had dragged down. Charrington began his work in a hayloft; from there he was crowded into a larger hall; then a big tent, until, in 1877, a larger Assembly Hall was opened where two thousand people were gathered night after night for nine years.

Keith-Falconer's name is inseparable from the grand work of Charrington, and therefore it is no digression to give that noble enterprise ample mention. The two young men, moved by a similar impulse, were divinely knit together, as were David and Jonathan. During his Cambridge days Keith-Falconer often went to London to visit his friend, watch his work, and give it help. He also took his share of the opposition and persecution that made Charrington its target. He accepted, with him, the "mobbing" which rewarded unselfish service to the degraded slaves of drink, going with him to the police office, when his friend was arrested on false charges, as one that was turning the world upside down. Like Charrington, also, he had his reward. He saw drunkards reformed, gangs of thieves broken up, public houses deserted and for sale at half their cost, and homes redeemed from the curse of rum and crime.

During the fearful winter of 1879 the feeding of hungry multitudes occupied the attention of Charrington and his helpers, and led ultimately to the *erection of the new hall* which, at a cost of \$200,000, stands with its buildings as a perpetual benediction to the neighborhood, and in which for over ten years untold blessing has been imparted to thousands and even millions. In that larger Assembly Hall the writer has more than once spoken, and in the

personal acquaintance of the founder and father of the enterprise he rejoices. From personal observation, therefore, he can testify that in that grand audience room on Mile End Road five thousand people gather under the sound of one voice; there, every night, a Gospel service is held; the days of mob violence are over, and Mr. Charrington finds stalwart defenders in the poor victims whose yoke he has been the means of breaking, and the whole East End is gradually being redeemed from its social anathema.

In all this work Keith-Falconer has an eternal share, as in its reward. It was he who, as honorary secretary, issued the necessary appeals, himself becoming a beggar for funds and a donor to the extent of \$10,000. As a college student he would hurry off to the metropolis for a week at a time, lend a hand and a voice as needed, visit the poor, teach the word, aid in administrative details, and then hurry back to Cambridge and its duties. In his *Memorials of Ion Keith-Falconer* Mr. Sinker says:

“In the summer of that year (1886) I accompanied Keith-Falconer to see the building, and we were taken by Mr. Charrington to the central point of the upper gallery of the great hall, to gain the best general view of the room. As we sat there I could not but be struck with the similar expression on the faces of the two men. It was one in which joy and keen resolve and humble thankfulness were strangely blended. One great work for God which Keith-Falconer had striven hard to further he was allowed to see in its full completeness, carried on by men working there with heartiest and purest zeal. Not while any of the present generation of workers survive will the name of Keith-Falconer fade out of loving remembrance in the great building in Mile End Road.”

All this work he did as a humble layman, who did not often speak in public, but who had learned the secret of “having a talk with a man,” and one man at a time—as

Jesus did with Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman. This was *his form of evangelistic and missionary work*, getting in touch with an individual soul, and finding the secret key that unlocked the heart—a personal, private conversation about the most important matters. Such a method of service courts no publicity and escapes observation, but does not fail of recognition in God's book of remembrance, where a special record is kept of those who think upon His name and speak often one to another. For example, while on a bicycle tour with a friend in Sutherlandshire, in 1884, he wrote to his wife: "We had a job to get across the Kyle. It was very low water, and we had to wade some distance before we got to the boat. We had a talk with the boatman, who said he had been praying and searching for years, but couldn't find Him." This modest, unpretending sentence, written to her he loved best, reveals the habit of the man.

ARABIA

The fourth and last period of his life is forever linked with Arabia.

After he passed his last examination at Cambridge, in 1880, Keith-Falconer gave himself, with all his concentration of mind, to the study of the Arabic, including the Koran. First he got from books what preparatory knowledge of that difficult tongue he could, and then went to the Nile, and at Assiout resided for some months with that well-known missionary, Dr. H. W. Hogg, to acquire the colloquial language, learn the temper of the Arabic mind, and study the Moslem faith. Then he again sought the university halls, and for three years longer carried on his research, translating the *Kalilah* and *Dimnah*,* and mean-

* These were the so-called "Fables of Bidpai" or Pilpai, an Indian Brahman and gymnosophist, of great antiquity. Scarcely any book but the Bible has been translated into so many tongues, and its history is a part of the history of human development. Bidpai has been called chief of the philosophers of India.

while filling the post of Hebrew Lecturer at Clare College and of Theological Examiner.

Here then is a young man, not yet thirty, married to a charming woman, Miss Bevan, and in the midst of the finest classical surroundings. Everything was calculated to root him at Cambridge, where before him lay a future of almost unlimited possibilities. He might have grown in such a soil until, like the palm, he overtopped others



STREET SCENE AT ADEN.

and blossomed into a surpassing fruitfulness, as well as a scholarly symmetry. Fame had her goal and laurel wreath in sight. But a higher calling and a fadeless crown absorbed him. He left all behind him to carry the Gospel message to distant Aden.

The life of Dr. John Wilson, of Bombay, had opened his eyes to the possibilities of a missionary career, and

about the same time General Haig had called attention to Arabia as a neglected field, and to the strategic importance of this particular station on the Red Sea as a point of approach and occupation. Aden as a military position controls the Red Sea, and in a mercantile and nautical point of view sustains a relation to Asia and Africa similar to that of Gibraltar to Europe and Africa. In the year of Victoria's coronation—1838—the Arab sultan was persuaded to cede the peninsula to England, and it was made a free port. It is but five hundred miles south from Mecca and six hundred and fifty from Medina. Thousands from all parts of Arabia enter the British territory every year and are compelled to see how the peace, order, freedom and good government, there prevalent, contrast with the tyranny and anarchy elsewhere found.

Keith-Falconer had an interview with General Haig, and in 1885, in the autumn, went *to Aden to prospect*. On his way he began inducting his wife into the mysteries of Arabic, and quaintly wrote: "Gwendolin struggling with Arabic. Arabic grammars should be strongly bound, because learners are so often found to dash them frantically on the ground."

The *result of his prospecting tour* was that he determined to fix on Sheikh-Othman, near by, as his station, leaving Aden to the Church Missionary Society. He explored the neighborhood, and personally proved to the people that not all Europeans are "clever people who get drunk and have no religion to speak of." He found camel riding not very pleasant, and saw one of those brutes seize and shake a man violently; and he adds, "a camel will sometimes bite off a man's head!"

In the spring of 1886 he and his wife were *again in England*, and on Easter Day, in the Assembly Hall at Mile End, Keith-Falconer delivered, on "Temptation," the most striking address of his life. Was it a reflection of the inward struggle he was then experiencing, with the parting

of the ways before him? with nobility, wealth, distinction, on the one hand, and seclusion, self-denial and obscurity, on the other?

In May he spoke before the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland on Mohammedan missions, an address equally impressive in its way, which reveals his purpose and clear conception of the possible service to which Arabia appealed. He said that he had been again and again urged to go to Arabia and set up a school, and that one day a Mohammedan, asking for a piece of paper, wrote in a mysterious fashion, "If you want the people to walk in your way, then *set up schools*." The man was a Hadji, returning from a pilgrimage to Mecca, where he had been thoroughly stripped of all his money. Keith-Falconer offered him a copy of John's gospel, but he would not accept it; and, being further questioned, acknowledged that he liked the historical parts, but other parts made him fearful. He pointed to the talk between Christ and the woman at Jacob's well, "If thou knewest the gift of God," etc., "and," said the Hadji, "that verse makes my heart tremble, lest I be made to follow in the way of the Messiah."

This young Semitic scholar, already the greatest [?] living orientalist, saw the way to a great work at this southern station in Arabia. He would have a school, a medical mission, and a depot for distributing the Holy Scriptures. He must study medicine himself and secure a Christian physician as his co-worker. He would put himself under the Foreign Mission Board of the Scottish Church, but he would pay all costs of the mission himself.

Just at this point, and greatly to his surprise, he was *made Professor of Arabic at Cambridge*. The position was partly honorary, its active teaching depending mostly on an associate; and so it was accepted, undoubtedly not because of a divided purpose, but because his mind was set on Arabia, and his Cambridge work would augment his

power to turn attention to its needs. He gave a course of three lectures on "The Pilgrimage to Mecca," and on the evening after his last lecture was again off for Aden with his wife and his accomplished colleague, Dr. Stewart Cowen.

This was November, 1886. He laid the foundation for his mission premises and work, and the force of his character was already making an impression on the Moslem mind, so that, within a few months, there were but few who came in touch with this Christlike man who were willing to admit that they were followers of Mohammed; but they were wont to say, "There are no Moslems here!" The Gospel in Arabic found both purchasers and readers with those who had read in this grand man the living epistle of God.

But the Aden fever proved a fatal foe. Both Keith-Falconer and his wife were stricken in February, 1887, and fresh attacks rapidly weakened his stalwart constitution until, on May 11, he sank into quiet slumber and could no more be awaked for service in this lower sphere. His biographer, Mr. Sinker, beautifully writes: "It was indeed the end. Quietly he passed away. God's finger touched him and he slept. Slept? nay, rather awakened, not in the close, heated room where he had so long lain helpless—the weary nurse, overcome with heat and watching, slumbering near—the young wife, widowed ere she knew her loss, lying in an adjoining room, herself broken down with illness as well as anxiety—the loyal doctor, resting after his two nights' vigil—not on these do Ion Keith-Falconer's eyes open. He is in the presence of his Lord; the life which is the life indeed has begun."

After five months of labor in his chosen field the body of Keith-Falconer was lovingly laid to rest in the cemetery at Aden by British officers and soldiers of Her Majesty—*fitting burial* for one of the soldiers of a greater King, who, with his armor on and his courage undaunted, fell

with his face to the foe. The martyr of Aden had entered God's Eden. And so Great Britain made her first offering—and it was a very costly one—to Arabia's evangelization.

THE SPEAKING DEAD.

No doubt there be those who will exclaim, "To what purpose is this waste!" for this flask of costly ointment, broken and poured out amid Arabia's arid sands, might have been kept in the classic halls of Cambridge, and even yet be breathing its perfume where scholars tread and heroes are made. To this and all such cavils of unbelief there is but one answer, and it is all-sufficient, for it is God's answer: "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter."

The Free Church, whose missionary he was, declares: "The falling asleep, in the first months of fervent service, of the Hon. Ion Keith-Falconer, in the extreme Asian outpost in South Arabia, gives solemn urgency to *his last appeal* to the cultured, the wealthy, and the unselfish, whom that devoted volunteer for Christ represented when he addressed them in these words: 'While vast continents are shrouded in almost utter darkness, and hundreds of millions suffer the horrors of heathenism or Islam, the burden of proof lies upon you to show that the circumstances in which God has placed you were meant by Him to keep you out of the foreign mission field.' "

God makes no mistakes, and we are "immortal till our work is done," if we are fully in His plan. We may not penetrate the arcana of His secret purposes and read the final issue of our disappointments, but, as Dr. J. W. Dulles used to say, they are, rightly read, "His appointments." The short career of Keith-Falconer is a lesson such as never has been more impressively taught—that *nothing is too good* to be given to God *on the altar of missions*. Keith-Falconer's death sent an electric shock through the

British kingdom and the wider Church of Christ. But it was his distinction and accomplishments that made it impossible for his life's lesson to remain unread. His fame gave a trumpet voice to his words and made his life vocal with witness. Admiration and love united to draw others to follow in the steps of a heroism so divinely self-oblivious. The Church asked for one volunteer to step into the breach, and thirteen of the graduating class of the New College at once responded; but the response did not end then or there.

The very year of Keith-Falconer's death *Robert P. Wilder* and *John N. Forman* were going about among the colleges and theological schools of the United States and Canada, appealing for volunteers, from the very best of the educated young men, for the foreign field. And now, during the years that have passed since this martyr spirit of Aden went up to God, several thousand lives of young men and women in Britain and America have been offered to God, quickened by this example of consecration.

The Henry Martyn Memorial Hall at Cambridge, the Hannington Memorial Hall at Oxford, and many *other monuments of the dead and living* who have given themselves to God's mission work are keeping alive the testimony of the Cambridge orientalist. He, being dead, yet speaketh, and no voice of the last half century is heard more widely by the young men of the Church of Christ.

He sought to "call attention to Arabia;" he has done it in a way and to an extent that he never imagined. The workman fell, but the work goes on. Under Rev. W. R. W. Gardner and Dr. Young new currents of influence began to flow through Aden. In 1888 a large number of Abyssinian children, who had been carried into Arabia from ruined homes and massacred families, for enslavement, were rescued by a British man-of-war and put into school in this mission for Christian training, to be sent back to Abyssinia as missionaries. Christian teachers,

evangelists, and physicians have since gone to this port on the Gulf of Aden to take up the work Keith-Falconer laid down. And on both sides of the Red Sea, in Africa and Asia, the mission which he began is likely to be the seed of other enterprises looking to the evangelization of both continents.

The Keith-Falconer Mission to Arabia has not come to its grave because its founder sleeps in the dreary cemetery at Aden. On these southern shores of Arabia stand the "Scots Church" and the Church of England edifices, one of which latter is largely built from collections made in the mail steamers that ply across those waters. The Scots Church, which is now building, is partly the result of the money raised by the children of the Free Church of Scotland, and under the supervision of an Arab contractor and workmen, some of whom are Jews. And so, curiously enough, Christians, Arabs and Jews unite to erect Christ's houses of prayer in the land of Ishmael! Dr. George Smith, who recently visited Aden, testifies to the prosperity and hopefulness of the congregation there worshipping in connection with the Scots Church, and says that in the pioneering stage of the Arab mission it supplies the spiritual life and enthusiasm of common worship and evangelical effort. Dr. Young acts as military chaplain for the British infantry and artillery located at Aden, and with his colleague undertakes not only to furnish two sermons a week, but to meet the demands made on two medical missionaries for Arab and Somali, Jew and Parsee; thus on one hand nourishing piety in the British residents, and reaching out on the other to the various foreign, Moslem, Parsee, and other populations that need Gospel effort.

The British camp and the native town of Aden lie in the crater of an extinct volcano. What a typical place in which to plant the Bible, with the tree of knowledge and of life! And the Bible is planted there. On a busy corner of the main street the British and Foreign Bible

Society's depot stands. Nearby stands the square and well-fenced inclosure, with its somewhat rude entrance, which is the resting place of the body of Keith-Falconer. In the middle of a row of graves of British officers and men, each with a single cross above it, may be seen the tomb of the first missionary that Scotland gave to Arabia; who, as Dr. Smith says, "died at thirty, one year younger than Henry Martyn, and was followed by the aged bishop,



DR. YOUNG'S DISPENSARY, at SHEIKH OTHMAN, ADEN.

Valpy French, on the eastern shore at Muscat. A massive block of white Egyptian marble covers the grave, while there rises at its head an exquisitely pure slab, with an inscription, under a coronet which might well represent the martyr's crown. There Dr. Cowen, who was then his medical colleague, and several officers and men of her British majesty's Ninety-eighth Regiment, as the sun set,

laid all that was mortal of the young Scottish noble, scholar, and self-consecrated missionary of the Free Church of Scotland. The sacred spot is the first missionary milestone into Arabia."

Dr. Smith further says—and we quote the words of this distinguished correspondent as the latest available information from this field:

"As the Keith-Falconer Mission, bearing its founder's name and generously supported by his family, this first modern mission to the Arab may be said to have begun anew in the year 1889. First of all, Principal Mackichan, when on his return to Bombay, after furlough, carefully inspected the Sheikh-Othman headquarters, and, with the local medical authorities, reported in favor of continuing and extending the plans of its founder. The mission is now, as a result of past experience, conducted by two fully qualified men, one of whom is married, who are working in most brotherly harmony, preaching the Gospel in Arabic as well as healing the sick. Its Arabic and English school is taught by Alexander Aabud, a married member of the Syrian Evangelical Church, from the Lebanon, but trained in the American mission in Egypt.

"All over this neighborhood the medical mission founded by Keith-Falconer is making for itself a name, and its doctors are received, or visited at their dispensary, as the messengers of God. European and native alike, natives from India and Africa, as well as the Arab camel drivers and subjects of the Sultan of Lahej—himself and his family patients of the Mission—turn to the missionaries with gratitude and hope, and will do them any service. Nowhere has the influence of medical missions in this early stage, of course preparatory, been so remarkable as in this Yemen corner of Arabia during the past seven years."

TRAITS OF CHARACTER

It is, perhaps, proper, before we add the last touches to this imperfect sketch of one of the finest, brightest, and noblest young men of the century, that we indicate some of those special traits which shone in him and provoke us to emulation. Among them we select the following as most pertinent to the particular purposes for which mainly this book is prepared, and with the prayer that many of those who read these pages may follow him as he followed the supreme Exemplar of us all.

First, his *simplicity*. The childlike character, refined of what is merely childish, is the divine ideal of human perfection. We must not outgrow the simple artlessness, humility, docility of childhood, but rather grow backward toward it perpetually. The ideal child is inseparable in our minds from faith, love, truth, and trust; and these are the cardinal virtues of Christian character. To learn to doubt, to hate, to lie, to suspect, is to learn the devil's lessons, and any approach to these is just so much progress in Satan's school. This pioneer to Arabia never lost his simple childlikeness. His manhood was not an outgrowing of his boyhood, in all that makes a child beautiful and attractive. He never put on airs of any sort, but hated all hollow pretense and empty professions. His was that highest art of concealing all art; in his most careful work he did not lose naturalness, and in his most studied performances there was no affectation. He acted out himself—a genuine, honest, sincere man, who concealed nothing and had nothing to conceal.

Second, his *eccentricity*. We use this word because it has forever had a new meaning by his interpretation of it. He was wont to say that a true disciple must not fear to be called "eccentric." "Eccentric," said he, "means '*out of centre*,' and you will be *out of centre* with the world if you are *in centre* with Christ." He dared to be one of God's "*peculiar* people, zealous of good works." While

we are content to live on the low level of the average "professor of religion" we shall exhibit no peculiarity, for there is no peculiarity about a dead level. But if, like a mountain rising from a plain, we dare to aspire to higher and better things, to get nearer to God, to live in a loftier altitude and atmosphere, we shall, like the mountain, be singular and exceptional, we cannot escape observation, and may not escape hostile criticism. Blessed is the man who, like Caleb and Joshua, ventures to stand comparatively alone in testimony to God; for it is such as these who go over into the inheritance of peculiar privileges and rewards.

Third, his *unselfishness*. Few of us appreciate the deformity and enormity of the sin of simply being absorbed in our own things. One may be a monster of repulsiveness in God's eyes through qualities that exhibit little outward hatefulness and ugliness to the common eye. Greed, lust, ambition, pride, envy and jealousy, malice and uncharity, may not be forbidden in man's decalogue, but they eat away the core of character like the worm in the apple's heart. Balzac, in one of his stories, revives the old myth of the magic skin which enabled the wearer to get his wish, but with every new gratification of selfish desire shrank and held him in closer embrace, until it squeezed the breath of life out of him. And the myth is an open mystery, to be seen in daily life. Every time that we seek something for ourselves only, without regard to God's glory or man's good, our very success is defeat; we may get what we want, but we shrink, in capacity for the highest joy and the noblest life.

Fourth, his *concentration*. Paul writes to the Philippians, "This one thing I do." In the original it is far more terse and dense with meaning. He uses two little Greek words, the shortest in the language (*ἐν δέ*), "But one!" an exclamation that no words can interpret. All his energies were directed toward and converged in one. Our

lives are a waste because they lack unity of aim and effort. We seek too many things to attain anything great or achieve anything grand. Our energies are divided, scattered, dissipated. Impulse is followed, and impulse is variable, unsteady, and inconstant, while principle is constant, like the polar star. We are too much controlled by opinions which change with the hour, instead of by convictions which, being intelligently formed, hold us, like the girdle of truth in the Christian armor, instead of our merely holding them. It is possible for a man or woman to gain almost any goal, desirable or not, if the whole energy be concentrated. How immense the importance, then, of getting a right purpose to command the soul, and then making everything else bend and bow before it!

PERSONAL LESSONS

God speaks to the young men and women of our day as in trumpet tones: "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear!" An example like that set before us in this life-story is one of God's voices. In Keith-Falconer "the Holy Ghost saith," "*Stop and consider!*" What way is your life-stream running? Are you living for yourself or for God and for man? Every man is his brother's keeper, and it is fitting that the first man who questioned this should have been Cain, his brother's murderer! Did it ever occur to the reader that every one of us is either his brother's keeper or slayer? Every life is saving or destroying other lives. We lift men up or we drag them down; there is no escape from responsibility.

Keith-Falconer saw that *no man liveth unto himself* and no man dieth unto himself. Life is bound up in a bundle with all other life. We are none of us independent of the others, and we cannot escape the necessity of influencing them for good or evil. Eternity alone can measure the capacity for such influence, for eternity alone can give the vision and the revelation of what life covers in

the reach and range of its mighty forces. It is a solemn and august thought that, to-day, each one of us is projecting lines of influence in the unending hereafter. The life span is infinite.

This Life but a Beginning.—So looked upon, this short career of thirty years did not end at Aden ten years ago. That was the laying of a basis for a building that is going on unseen and silently, and whose spires will pierce the clouds. That was the planting of a seed for a tree whose branches shall shake like Lebanon, and wave in beauty and fertility when the mountains are no more. That was the starting of a career which is still going on, only that the cloud is between us and its hidden future, and we cannot trace its onward, upward path.

Let us turn once more to that grave at Aden and read *the simple inscription*:

TO
THE DEAR MEMORY OF
THE HON. ION KEITH-FALCONER,
THIRD SON OF
THE EARL AND COUNTESS OF KINTORE,
WHO ENTERED INTO REST
AT SHEIKH-OTHMAN, MAY 11, 1887,
AGED 30 YEARS.

“If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honor.”

[NOTE.—For later accounts of the work of the Keith-Falconer Mission see their printed annual reports; for the work of the Arabian Mission the Quarterly, “Neglected Arabia”.]

Press of
Chauncy Holt
New York

“‘My sword I give to him that shall succeed me in my pilgrimage, and my courage and skill to him that can get it. My marks and scars I carry with me, to be a witness for me, that I have fought His battles who now will be my rewarder’ So he passed over, and all the trumpets sounded for him on the other side.’”

—*Pilgrim's Progress,*

Death of Valiant-for-Truth.